

Claims

1. Apparatus for determining the suitability of products to an individual, the apparatus comprising storage means storing first data concerning the composition of the products and storage means storing second data concerning the sensitivity of an individual to products or product ingredients, a scanner for scanning markings representative of the products and processing means for identifying a selected product from the scanned marking and providing an indication of the suitability of the identified product to the individual.
2. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first data represents the composition or characteristics thereof of a range of products available to a user of the apparatus.
3. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second data defines products or product ingredients to which the individual is sensitive.
4. Apparatus according to claim 3, wherein, the second data is in the form of maximum values of product or product ingredients which are acceptable to the individual.
5. Apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a portable hand-held device incorporating the scanner, a computer providing the storage means for the first data at least and the processing means, and a display for indicating the acceptability of the product.
6. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the integers of the apparatus are in separate devices, with the storage means for the first data at least in a computer separate from a hand-held device incorporating the scanner.
7. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second data is stored on a card.

8. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the scanner is operative to read a marking in the form of a machine-readable bar code on the product itself or on a separate product label or product indicator.

9. A method of determining the suitability of a product to an individual, the method comprising storing in computer means information concerning the composition of a plurality of products and information concerning the sensitivity of the individual to a product or product ingredient, scanning a marking representative of a selected product and thereby identifying the selected product and deriving an indication of the suitability of the selected product to the individual.